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ABSTRACT

Although Total Quality Management (TQM) has been adopted at a number of community colleges in the areas of financial aid, admissions and registration, and staff performance, its use is almost non-existent in the evaluation of classroom teaching. Barriers to its application to the classroom include faculty resistance to the idea of students as customers and to interference in their disciplines, threats to academic freedom, and the costs of training. Initiatives that have been developed for introducing TQM in the classroom include Angelo and Cross' classroom assessment techniques (CATs), designed for use by faculty members to evaluate the quality of their teaching, and the Locate-Establish-Assess-Research-Nominate (LEARN) model, which uses student quality teams to identify opportunities for improving learning. For TQM to become functional in the classroom, it is important that administrators facilitating the process recognize, reward, and reinforce faculty performance in the classroom. Some administrators have chosen to root evaluations in a developmental framework that eliminates fear and surprises and expands communication. Finally, administrators must ensure that faculty evaluation is based on objectives and goals commensurate with TQM principles. Contains 13 references. (BCY)

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Digest

April 1997 EDO-JC-97-06

TQM and Faculty Evaluation: Ever the Twain Shall Meet?

by Hans A. Andrews

Total Quality Management (TQM), a form of management that emphasizes continuous quality improvement processes in institutional operations , represents a major shift in academic administrative circles from hierarchical to collegial management. Under a variety of names such as Continuous Quality Management, or Responsibility Center Management, TQM type principles have been successfully implemented at a number of community colleges, particularly in areas such as financial aid, admissions and registration, and clerical and staff performance (Spanbauer, 1992). Despite enthusiasm for TQM in community colleges, some critics (Seymour, 1991; Cross, 1993) note that it is applied to administrative areas and not to academic areas such as teaching and learning. For example, evaluating classroom teaching using TQM principles is non-existent in all but a few of the community colleges that have adopted TQM. Administrators, as facilitators of TQM, can bring it into the classroom by recognizing, rewarding and reinforcing the performance of faculty in teaching. One way in which this can be accomplished is by adopting a valid and fair appraisal process that does more than pay "lip service" (Licata and Andrews, 1990) to improving the quality of teaching. This Digest presents barriers to applying TQM in the classroom, reviews innovative ways in which select community colleges are introducing TQM principles and practices into the classroom, and discusses the role of administrators in facilitating TQM through the faculty evaluation process.

Barriers to Applying TQM in the Classroom

Applying the TQM principle of continuous quality improvement to teaching requires an understanding of faculty discomfort with and resistance to the business-oriented approach of the TQM model. Schauerman and Peachy (1994), Heverly (1994), and Chaffee and Sherr (1992) describe some of the barriers to translating TQM to the classroom:

- faculty resistance to the notion of the student as customer or beneficiary;
- faculty resistance to interference in their disciplinary and teaching expertise;
- differences between faculty and TQM reward and recognition systems;
- threats to academic freedom;
- costs of TQM training, which take away from direct classroom support.

Despite these barriers, some community colleges are finding innovative ways to apply TQM in the classroom.

Applying TQM in the Classroom

Several initiatives to introduce the TQM principle and practice of continuous quality improvement into the classroom have generated interest among faculty. One is Angelo and Cross' (1993) classroom assessment techniques (CAT) model. CAT is designed to be used by faculty members to assess the quality of teaching and learning in their own classrooms. "CAT allows instructors to apply their own creativity and knowledge of their discipline to develop assessment measures that meet their particular needs and teaching priorities" (p. xiv). A different approach to applying TQM in the classroom is Baugher's (1992) LEARN (Locate-Establish-Assess-Research-Nominate) model, developed at Samford University. It brings the faculty member together with a student quality team to identify opportunities for improving student learning in a specific class. The student team uses brainstorming to identify characteristics that may be interfering with student learning. Additionally, the team develops a survey, containing items based on their brainstorming, and uses it to gather data from the entire class. The objective is to identify opportunities for improving the teaching/learning environment. The data gathered from the class are used to plan improvements in classroom processes. The changes are implemented and then evaluated to determine their impact.

Delaware County Community and Fox Valley Technical College in Wisconsin have taken yet another approach to incorporating TQM into instruction by developing faculty in-service training programs. These programs are designed to provide in-service training, support, and facilitation of faculty teams by involving faculty in planning and evaluating TQM (Heverly, 1994, Needham, Staas, and Zilinksy, 1992). Fox Valley Technical College has developed guidelines

for excellence in instruction and curriculum. Quality tools and strategies are taught in an advanced state of training with the expectation that faculty will use them to continuously improve the instructional process. The "course is an interactive, collaborative seminar designed to explore competency-based curriculum development and flexible delivery techniques in the context of a quality-based institution. It includes concepts of quality and common directions, customer service, team work, and problem solving for improving processes" (p.9).

The Role of Administrators

In order for TQM to become functional in the classroom and practiced in faculty evaluation, it is important that administrators facilitating the TQM process at their institutions recognize, reward, and reinforce faculty performance in the classroom.

In concert with the TQM approach, administrators at Edison Community College and Savannah Technical Institute chose to root evaluations in a developmental framework in which fear and surprises were removed from the evaluation process and communication was expanded (Coady, Hair, and Spanbauer, 1994). Rooting evaluation in a developmental framework requires training in the underlying philosophy of the system, techniques of rating and forms completion, and the basic skills of appraisal interviewing (Centra, 1979). According to Gibson (1992), an administrator will need to exhibit a positive and constructive attitude and effective listening skills, possess adequate knowledge of the faculty member's teaching functions, give reflective feedback, ask open-ended questions, and engage in joint goal-setting.

In addition, administrators must ensure that faculty evaluation is based on objectives and goals commensurate with TQM principles. The evaluation should include faculty observation, quantitative measures of student achievement of specific goals and objectives, measurement of the faculty member's use of instructional methodologies, and control and direction of classroom behaviors (Smith and Barber, 1994). Guided by emphasis on continuous quality improvement, systematic evaluation and recognition of effective teaching by administrators ultimately can enhance student learning and development.

Conclusion

Implementing the TQM principle of continuous quality improvement in the classroom and including it as part of the faculty evaluation process is a challenging task for those working in two-year colleges—a challenge that must be met if TQM is to succeed in improving the quality of undergraduate education in community colleges. Research to date has found that while ome faculty will (and do) experiment with TQM, many are resistant to it as a viable approach to quality improvement. Ensuring that administrators have the necessary skills and training to evaluate classroom teaching is one means for easing faculty discomfort and resistance while promoting the quality of teaching in community college classrooms.

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